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of the

Medical Officer of Health

for the

Seaton (Devon) Urban Council

1925

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REPORT FOR 1925.

GENTLEMEN.

I present a Report of the Public Health and Sanitary Condition of the Seaton Urban District during the year 1925. This is the Second "Survey Report" (Quinquennial) and is rather more comprehensive than an "Ordinary" Annual Report, but in the case of a small Urban District the Ministry of Health does not require the elaborate details which are necessary for a large town.

I. NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

Area (acres)	1,091
Population (Census 1921, adjusted)	1,845
(Estimated by R.G. at June 30th, 1925)	1,825
No. of inhabited houses (1921)	492
Rateable value (October, 1925)	£14,342
Sum represented by a penny rate	£59 15s. 2d.

Seaton is a small residential Seaside Town and Health Resort. It is the nearest Devonshire watering place to London. The great natural beauty of Seaton Bay and of the country in the vicinity, and its salubrious air attract a large number of visitors especially during holiday times.

The Trade of the Town is almost entirely connected with supplying lodging accommodation, personal comfort, and amusement for residents and visitors.

The Rural Part of the District is devoted to agriculture and dairy farming.

The Soil is sandy and chalky, with subsoil of gravel and loam.

VITAL STATISTICS.

(a) *Births.* Total 20. M. 12; F. 8; Illegitimate 0.
Birth Rate 10·95.

(b) *Deaths.* Total 27. M. 15; F. 12.

More than half the total number were persons over 70 years of age.

Death Rate 14·79.

Infant Mortality. Under 1 year 2

One was an illegitimate male, aged 3 weeks, and the other an unknown female, aged under 7 days, whose body was found on the beach.

Rate of Infant Mortality, 100 per 1,000 births.

CAUSES OF DEATH, viz.—

Heart Disease, 5; Cancer, 4; Cerebral hæmorrhage, 3; Tuberculosis (Non-pulmonary), 1; Bronchitis, 1; Pneumonia, 1; Ulcer of Stomach, 1; Cirrhosis of Liver, 1; Other defined diseases, 9; Ill-defined causes, 1.

No death occurred from any of the principal Zymotic diseases nor from any cause connected with Childbirth.

There was no cause of sickness or invalidity during the year which is specially noteworthy.

POOR LAW.

The amount of Poor Law Relief was £278 14s. 6d.

2. GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT.

1. HOSPITALS.

(a) General. There is no hospital accommodation for poor persons in the District. General and Special Hospital treatment is obtained in Exeter or in the Union Infirmary at Axminster.

(b) Tuberculosis. The County Council's Sanatoria at "Ivy Bank," Exeter, and "Hawkmoor," nr. Bovey Tracey receive cases from this district.

(c) Maternity and Children. Only the Union Infirmary at Axminster.

(d) Fever. Cases of Enteric Fever, Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria, are received at the County Council's Isolation Hospital at Whipton, Exeter.

(e) Small Pox. No local provision. The County Council has undertaken to provide accommodation for any cases from Seaton District.

(f) There is no Institutional provision for unmarried mothers, illegitimate infants, and homeless children except such as is provided at the Union Infirmary at Axminster.

2. AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

(a) For Infectious Cases. No local provision. Ambulance from Whipton Isolation Hospital fetches cases of Infectious Disease accepted for admission to that Institution.

(b) For Non-infectious and Accident Cases. The E. Devon Motor Ambulance provided by the Red Cross and St. John's Societies is available. It is stationed at Honiton (Tel. No. 33 Honiton), and is supported by Voluntary Subscriptions and Fees charged for use.

3. CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.

(a) Maternity and Child Welfare. No local centre. The Voluntary Centre which had existed for several years was closed in 1924 on account of the small attendance of mothers and children.

(b) A lady Health Visitor appointed by the C.C. works in the district. She is officially notified of all Births, and visits mothers at their homes and gives instruction and advice. She is also official School Nurse.

4. PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.

M.O.H. and Sanitary Inspector. Part time Officers. Half salaries paid by C.C. The S. Inspector is also Surveyor and Rate Collector.

5. PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOME.

(a) General. The Seaton Nursing Association employs a District Nurse approved by the C.C. She attends Maternity and Non-infectious cases and her services are available for the sick poor.

(b) For Infectious Diseases. No provision.

6. MIDWIVES.

The District Nurse was the only R.M. practising in 1925.

7. LEGISLATION IN FORCE.

(a) Byelaws and Regulations dealing with Building, Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops, Slaughter Houses, Nuisances and Common Lodging Houses.

(b) Adoptive Acts. P.H. Amendment Act (1907) Parts ii., iii., iv., Sections 52—60, 62—66, 68; Part x., Sections 92—94. By order of L.G.B. to take effect from Nov. 15th, 1909. Also Part vi., by order of M. of H., May 31st, 1923.

3. SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

1. WATER.

The Water Supply of the Town is derived from a number of Springs rising on the hillside to the N.W. The geological formation of the ground at the source is cretaceous and the water

is rather hard in character. It is very pure and contains no dangerous organisms. It has no corrosive effect on iron pipes and no plumbo-solvent action. The latest chemical and bacteriological Analysis and Report are appended.

The quantity of the supply is always abundant. During 1925 the amount supplied was 31,434,000 gals., giving an average daily amount of 37 gals. per head. A constant supply was maintained.

The few outlying farms and dwelling houses are supplied by wells which always yield a sufficient quantity of good water.

I am not aware of any pollution of streams.

2. DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

The Main Sewer of the Town discharges into the Sea at the E. end of the Beach. The Outfall Pipe is showing signs of wear and will shortly require renovation. The question of lengthening this pipe is under consideration. On the W. side there is a small Outfall dealing with the sewage of a few houses. Here the solids of the sewage are intercepted by a tank and only the effluent is discharged at the outfall, where the beach shingle and gravel form a natural filter bed. During the year the drains and sewers have acted satisfactorily. 17 new drains have been laid connecting new houses with sewers. In 1921 the Council built excellent Public Lavatories (M. & F.) on the sea front. These were much wanted, and have proved a great convenience to the public.

3. CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

All dwelling houses in the town are provided with W.C.s. In a few instances one W.C. serves for 2 cottages. Working class houses are periodically inspected to see that flushing cisterns and fittings are kept in good order. In the Rural part of the District the Pail System is employed, and the pail contents are disposed of in gardens or allotments.

4. SCAVENGING.

Is done by the Council. Domestic Refuse is removed 3 times a week, and Trade Refuse daily if required. Open Refuse Boxes and Buckets are still used by many householders contrary to the By-Law which orders that these must be provided with covers. The main streets are swept daily and have been kept very clean. Wire Refuse Receptacles are provided at various points on the Sea-Front and elsewhere for Public use.

5. SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE DISTRICT.

Extracts from Sanitary Inspector's Report for 1925.

“House to house Inspection of Dwelling Houses (Housing of Working Class Act, 1909) has been done as far as necessary.

No. of Houses Inspected (Housing Regulations, 1910)	...	6
„ „ found unfit for habitation	... ..	0
„ „ recommended to be closed	... ..	0
„ Old Houses satisfactorily renovated	... ..	1
„ Inspections of Bakehouses	... ..	12
„ „ „ Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops	... ..	12
„ „ „ Slaughter Houses	... ..	12
„ New Drains Laid	... ..	17
„ Disinfections of houses, bedding, etc. after sickness		9
„ Samples of Water taken for Analysis	... ..	1 ”

6. PREMISES AND OCCUPATIONS CONTROLLED BY BY-LAWS.

These include Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops, Slaughter Houses and Bakehouses, and will be further mentioned in the Food Section of the Report. There are no common lodging houses in the district, and no offensive trades are carried on.

7. SCHOOLS.

The Public Elementary Schools have been inspected. The Education Authority has decided to make certain structural alterations to the buildings which will improve the cloak room accommodation and alter the position of the sanitary conveniences. These improvements are much needed. The class room walls also require repair and colour washing. The Schools were not closed during the year on account of any Infectious Disease, and the average attendance of all classes of children was very good.

4. HOUSING.

The general standard of housing is good. The working classes generally are well housed, but some of the older cottages do not come up to modern standard. Owners of cottage property keep their cottages in good repair and remedy defects without unnecessary delay. No cases of overcrowding have been reported. The Council is building a block of 12 working class cottages of the parlour type : of these, 4 were completed and occupied at December 31st, and the remainder will be finished early in 1926. These new houses will relieve existing house shortage and there will be no urgent necessity for further provision. During the past 5 years about 50 houses, mostly of the villa type, have been built by private enterprise.

Housing Statistics for the year 1925.

No. of New Houses erected during the year	...	Total	17
,, With State Assistance under the Housing Acts			5
,, (i) By Local Authority, 4 (ii) By other persons, 1			
Dwelling Houses found unfit for Habitation	...		0
Action taken under Statutory Powers	...	...	0
Notices served under Public Health Acts	...	...	0
Closing orders, 0; Demolition orders	...	...	0

5. INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

1. MILK SUPPLY.

Most of the supply is produced in the district, and some is brought in from the neighbouring Parishes of Colyton and Axmouth. There are 9 Registered Cowsheds with 6 Dairies and 4 Milkshops, and 2 Registered Purveyors of Milk whose Cowsheds are not situated in the District. All those in the District have been inspected quarterly and were found kept clean and in good order. The quantity of the supply is sufficient and the milk is pure and wholesome.

The Cows in all cases are kept out at grass for the greater part of the day all the year round. No Certified, Graded or Pasteurised Milk is produced or purveyed in the District.

2. MEAT.

The Sanitary Inspector was appointed the Council's Officer under the Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924, and inspects meat at time of slaughter. The Council has made no local regulations regarding the protection of meat from contamination when exposed for sale in butcher's shops, and in the absence of any definite Rule from the Ministry of Health the trade is carried on much as before. The Shops are kept very clean. During the year 229 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. of Chilled Beef were surrendered as unfit for human food.

There is no Public Abattoir. Registered Slaughter Houses 3. Inspected frequently and kept clean and sanitary.

3. BAKEHOUSES.

Three. Inspected quarterly. Special Regulations applying to Bakehouses are properly observed.

4. SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.

Is administered by the C.C. through the Police. In 1925, Samples of Milk (5); Cheese (3); Margarine (2); Moist Sugar (2); Coffee (2); Cocoa (1); Sponge Cake (1); Mixed Sweets (1); Pepper (1); and Malt Vinegar (1); were taken. All were found free from adulteration and wholesome in quality.

6. PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

The District has experienced little Notifiable Infectious Disease during the period since 1920.

The C.C. undertakes Bacteriological Examinations and supplies Medical Practitioners with Outfits for taking Specimens for Examination. The Seaton U.D.C. keeps a small Emergency Stock of Diphtheria Antitoxin. Free of cost for poor persons. In all cases of Notifiable Infectious Disease the Sanitary Inspector disinfects sickrooms, bedding, clothes, etc., at the termination of the illness. Disinfection is also done in all cases of Tuberculosis, when temporary residents vacate lodgings. Also in Medical and Surgical Cases when disinfection seems desirable. 9 Cases were dealt with during the year.

Vaccination. About 50% of infants born are vaccinated. This has been about the average for many years past. No Primary Vaccinations or Re-Vaccinations were performed during the year by the M.O.H. under the Public Health (Small Pox Prevention) Regulation of 1917.

NOTIFICATIONS (OTHER THAN TUBERCULOSIS) IN 1925.

Disease.	Total Cases Notified	Cases admitted to Hospital	Total Deaths
Small Pox - - -	0	—	—
Scarlet Fever - - -	2	0	0
Diphtheria - - -	1	0	0
Enteric Fever (including Paratyphoid)	0	—	—
Puerperal Fever - - -	0	—	—
Pneumonia - - -	2	0	1
Other diseases generally notifiable	0	—	—
Other diseases notifiable locally, Chicken Pox	3	0	0
Ophthalmia Neonatorum -	0	—	—

TUBERCULOSIS. NEW CASES AND MORTALITY DURING 1925

AGE PERIODS	NEW CASES				DEATHS
	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.		
	M.	F.	M.	F.	
Years.					
25 to 35	I	I			Nil
45 ,, 55	I				
TOTALS	2	I			

7. FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

There are no large Factories in the District and no offensive or dangerous trades are carried on. A Register is kept. At Dec. 31st, the registered number of premises was 35, viz. — Factories, 18 (including 2 Bakehouses) and Workshops, 17. These are connected with the various industries usually found in a small town. All were inspected during the year and found kept according to the Regulations. There are no "home workers" in the district, and no labour is imported for fruit or pea picking.

8. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Rainfall for 1925 was 38·35 inches, an amount considerably above the average.

The General Public Health throughout the year was very good, there was no special incidence of illness, and very little infectious disease of any kind. The Sanitary Condition of the Town and district was satisfactory.

Signed

F. MORTIMER REYNOLDS, M.B., C.M.,
Medical Officer of Health.

Water Analysis and Report.

The Clinical Research Association, Ltd.,
London, W.C.,
August 25th, 1925.

To the Medical Officer of Health, Seaton, Devon.

† "The Sample of Water collected on Aug. 18th, 1925, and
"received here on Aug. 19th, 1925, has been examined, and I have
"been instructed to forward the following Report thereon" :—

RESULTS.

I. CHEMICAL.

		<i>Parts per 100,000</i>		<i>Grains per Gal.</i>
Total Solids (dried at 120 deg. C.)	...	33·80	...	23·66
Combined Chlorine	... ..	2·7	..	1·9
Equivalent to Na. Cl.	... ..	4·5	...	3·1
Nitric Nitrogen	... ..	0·32	...	0·22
Nitrous Nitrogen	... ..	Nil.	...	Nil.
Ammoniacal Nitrogen	... ..	Nil.	...	Nil.
Albumenoid Nitrogen	... ..	0·0004	...	0·0003
Oxygen absorbed in 4 hours at 27 deg. C.		0·0004	...	0·0003
Lead or Copper	... ..	Nil.	...	Nil.
Temporary hardness (equivalent to Ca Co ₃)		23·7	...	16·6
Permanent hardness	... ..	2·3	...	1·6
Total hardness	... ..	26·0	...	18·2

II. BACTERIOLOGICAL (Cultural and Microscopical)

Average number of organisms producing visible colonies

on gelatine plates incubated at 20-22 deg. C. for 3 days ... 67 per c.c.

Average number of organisms producing visible colonies

on agar plates incubated at 37·5 deg. C. for 2 days ... 4 per c.c.

Bacillus Coli Not found in 100 c.c.

Streptococci ,, ,, 30 c.c.

Bacillus Enteritidis Sporogenes ,, ,, 100 c.c.

REMARKS.

Judged on the results the water may be regarded as being
of exceptional good quality.

(Signed) W. J. C.,
Sec.

† This Sample of Water was taken from the Public Drinking
Fountain on the Sea Front.

